

Early Childhood Education and Care in Arizona

Context, Data, and Resources
for Municipal Leaders

August 2022



The Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable

The Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable, an initiative of Helios Education Foundation and WestEd, brings together mayors of Arizona cities and towns, district superintendents, and their key staff to share data, evidence-based and promising practices, and programmatic strategies that can help address local challenges affecting students' educational and career choices.

Major funding for the Roundtable is provided by the Helios Education Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Arizona Community Foundation. The Roundtable is operated by WestEd, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, research, development, and service agency that works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. The views expressed in this resource do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Arizona Community Foundation, Collaborative Communications Group, Helios Education Foundation, WestEd, the Roundtable, or its members.

About The Arizona PreK Alignment for Early Childhood Success Initiative

The Arizona Pre-K Alignment for Early Childhood Success Initiative brings together representatives from five Arizona cities—Flagstaff, Mesa, Phoenix, Tempe, and Tucson—and the National League of Cities. The goal of the initiative is to align regional efforts, raise awareness, support universal PreK, and develop a sustainable financing and resourcing plan for universal PreK in Arizona. Members meet regularly on issues related to early childhood education and care in Arizona, with a focus on access, equity, quality, and sustainability. Initiative members proposed the ongoing project that has led to the creation of this resource.

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Programs Enable Municipalities and Their Residents to Thrive

Effective systems of early childhood education and care can help to empower families and communities. Education and care provide young children with safe environments designed to nurture their cognitive and social development. They enable parents and caretakers of young children to participate in the workforce. And, in so doing, these systems strengthen local and regional economies, unlocking an exceptional return on investment for municipal governments and their partners in the community.

Despite the importance of early childhood education and care, many families in Arizona and across the country struggle to access affordable, high-quality options that meet their needs, a struggle that the pandemic has both spotlighted and exacerbated. For parents, the lack of access to high-quality child care and education for their young children is associated with lost income and diminished professional opportunities in the short and long terms. Businesses and municipalities also bear a real cost in the form of losses related to reduced productivity and lower tax revenues, among others.

Accordingly, “families, government, and businesses have a shared stake in—and a shared responsibility for—expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care.”¹ Municipal leaders have an especially important role to play in championing the expansion of early childhood education and care systems in their communities. The National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families has identified a range of efforts and initiatives—from relatively modest to highly involved and ambitious—municipal leaders can undertake to strengthen early childhood systems, including:²

Prioritizing Early Childhood

- Raise awareness and build support through broad public engagement.
- Lead an early childhood coalition with cross-sector representation.
- Encourage city agencies to support early childhood efforts.
- Designate an early childhood advisor or coordinator.
- Augment and leverage early childhood funding, such as through levy earmarks and attracting philanthropic and other private resources.
- Model best practices as an employer, such as by providing municipal employees with parental leave and on-site child care centers.

¹McHenry, K. and Smith, L. (2021). “Child Care is a Business Affair.” Bipartisan Policy Center. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/child-care-is-a-business-affair/>

²Institute for Youth, Education and Families. (2019). “Supporting Early Childhood Success: Action Kit for Municipal Leaders.” National League of Cities.

Expanding Access to Child Care

- Provide information about child care to families and communities.
- Increase the supply of child care using block grants, tax revenues, donated space, loans, and incentives.
- Review zoning regulations for family child care to facilitate creation of new family/at-home child care programs.
- Develop creative partnerships to fill gaps.
- Address transportation barriers.
- Make child care more affordable, such as through use of general funds for child care subsidies, public-private early learning scholarships, and advocating for increased state and federal funding.

Numerous cities and towns across Arizona are taking steps like these to strengthen early childhood education and care systems so that more children and families in their communities can access the services they need.

The Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable, at the request of the Arizona Pre-K Alignment for Early Childhood Success Initiative team, has developed this resource in support of these efforts. It provides an overview of key issues related to early childhood education and care, a collection of data points on early childhood gaps and the estimated economic impact of those gaps, and a set of Roundtable member snapshots.

Taken as a whole, this resource offers a point-in-time perspective on early childhood education and care in Arizona using the most current available data, some of which predates the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, the pandemic has had—and continues to have—a major impact on families, education and care providers, health and social services systems, and municipalities. It is important to recognize the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and the challenges inherent to collection and publication of timely data on need, demand, supply, and access to early childhood education and care. The dynamism of the situation—as municipalities respond to the changing needs and challenges of their residents and communities—resists being quantified in real time.

Advocating for Stronger Early Childhood Education and Care Systems: Essential Facts

Growing Need: By 2050, the number of young children in Arizona is projected to increase by 20 percent.³

Developmental Importance: 90 percent of a child’s brain growth takes place before the age of five. “The quality of a child’s experiences in the first few years of life – positive or negative – helps shape how their brain develops.”⁴

Workforce Challenges: “The poverty rate for early educators in Arizona is 20.5 percent, much higher than for Arizona workers in general (10.8 percent) and 7.9 times as high as for K-8 teachers (2.6 percent)”⁵

Return on Investment: Every dollar invested in early childhood programs is estimated to generate returns ranging from \$4 to \$16 through increased high school graduation, college-going, and economic development and individual incomes, as well as decreased dependence on social safety net programs and lower crime and incarceration rates.⁶

³First Things First. (2021). Building Bright Futures: Arizona’s Early Childhood Opportunities Report. Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board (First Things First). <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/State-Needs-and-Assets-Report-2021.pdf>

⁴First Things First (n.d.). “Brain Development.” Author. <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/#:~:text=90%25%20of%20Brain%20Growth%20Happens%20Before%20Kindergarten&text=Incredibly%2C%20it%20doubles%20in%20size,center%20of%20the%20human%20body.>

⁵Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. (2020). “Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020: Arizona.” University of California–Berkeley. <https://csce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/states/arizona/>

⁶First Things First (n.d.). “Investing in Early Childhood.” Author. <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/investing-in-early-childhood/>

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPOTLIGHT: **FLAGSTAFF**

In Flagstaff, 45 percent of children ages three and four attend a state-regulated child care or preschool, leaving the remaining percentage of children in the care of friends, neighbors, or a family member. Affordability is a prominent challenge for families seeking to access early childhood education and care. The high cost of living in the Flagstaff area prevents many families from affording high-quality preschool, and higher minimum wages are pushing parents out of income brackets that qualify for Head Start or voucher and scholarship programs.

In addition to financial barriers, there is a shortage of high-quality educational programming and care options. There are 2.6 children for each space of existing capacity in the Flagstaff area for three and four-year-olds, and only 26 percent of child care and preschool centers meet the definition of high-quality (either by being accredited, a Head Start program, or meeting the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) four-to-five-star rating). As a result, nearly half of all five-year-old children in Flagstaff do not meet reading benchmarks (compared to national norms (FUSD, 2018)). Children who did not attend preschool were more likely to score below the Letter Naming Fluency and Letter Sound Fluency target benchmarks compared to those who did attend preschool.

Elevate PreK is the City of Flagstaff's three-year collective impact pilot program focused on enhancing the quality, access, and sustainability of high-quality early childhood programs in Flagstaff. The program is designed around three goals. The first focuses on establishing a high-quality, full-day, year-round preschool program that sets a gold standard for early education that can be scaled in Flagstaff and beyond. The second goal focuses on developing a streamlined system of supports that increases access to high quality early learning for families in Flagstaff and beyond. The third goal focuses on community collaboration to develop a sustainable financial model that expands existing early learning services and supports.

Elevate PreK has received funding from the city and the county to pilot classrooms that model high-quality preschool programming. These classrooms target families between 101–250% of the federal poverty level that are currently not accessing preschool services. The goal is to serve families who do not qualify for existing child care assistance but cannot afford full tuition. The first classroom launched, in partnership with Flagstaff Unified School District, in August of 2021. The second classroom will launch in August 2022, in partnership with Quality Connections and the YMCA—pending American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

The program has also launched the Elevate PreK Resource Finder, which provides an online platform and access to a Family Partner Specialist that can navigate a family to child care assistance options, as well as the Elevate PreK enrollment process. Additionally, Elevate PreK has established the Northern Arizona Social Peak, a service that provides relationship-based case management to families through play-based activities in non-traditional settings in the community. A committee, representing a range of social services, has formed to improve the coordination of case management for young children and families.

Elevate PreK is preparing to develop a sustainability plan for ensuring all four-year-olds have access to high-quality early learning. A formal coalition will be created, and the program will be requesting coaching to lead this group through aligning its vision for the work and building a unified approach for promoting the importance of high-quality early learning. Flagstaff has committed \$250,000 in ARPA funding towards early learning assistance, for which Elevate PreK will apply.

More information can be found at www.elevateprek.com.

Three Significant Early Childhood Issues for Arizona

AFFORDABILITY

Even when early childhood education and care options are available, in the sense that there are providers with open slots, many Arizona families cannot afford the cost. Early childhood education and care is expensive to provide—this is especially true for high-quality programs—and providers, in the face of low state investment in early childhood (see following section), necessarily pass operational costs to families. In turn, families that cannot afford tuition and fees must either withdraw their children (if fees rise to the point of being unaffordable) or forego care entirely (if fees were never affordable in the first place).

Analysis by the Economic Policy Institute shows that “by the time the pandemic hit, the average cost of child care for toddlers had topped \$8,500 a year in Arizona, while infant care averaged nearly \$11,000 annually.”⁷

It is important to note that affordability—and the myriad factors that influence it—varies among municipalities and regions in Arizona. In recognition of this, the City of Tempe included affordability analyses in an early childhood education feasibility study (see page 9).

DIMINISHED STATE FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS OR EARLY EDUCATION

One of the most significant challenges facing municipal leaders in Arizona in their efforts to strengthen early childhood education and care systems is the state’s disinvestment in early childhood. This disinvestment contributed to Arizona losing the \$20 million federal Preschool Development Grant, which it originally won in 2014, because the state could not demonstrate it had dedicated sufficient funds to early childhood programs.⁸

According to Education Forward Arizona, “Arizona has not invested in quality early learning since the cuts of the Great Recession. Some programs, including the Early Childhood Block Grant, were eliminated and never restored. Coupled with disinvestments in childcare subsidies for the working poor (down to \$7 million from \$70 million), Arizona now faces an early childhood education crisis.”⁹

The National Institute for Early Education Research ranks Arizona 39 among all states when it comes to state spending on three- to five-year-olds enrolled in quality center-based environments.¹⁰

BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS

Access to ground-based internet connections with sufficient download and upload speeds (25Mb/3Mb) is essential to education, employment, accessing goods and services, and overall quality of life. In rural communities across the country and throughout Arizona—as well as in certain urban areas—broadband access is often limited, whether as a function of provider availability or affordability for families. In turn, this limited access can create an additional barrier for families in their efforts to secure child care for their young children. A lack of broadband access can make it difficult—or practically impossible—for families to use publicly available resources (like the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral) to locate education and care options and providers; find information about financial supports; and communicate with organizations that provide support in navigating the early childhood education and care landscape.

⁷Polletta, M. (2021). “State Leaders’ Decade of Neglect Imperiled Fragile Child Care System. The Pandemic Nearly Made It Collapse.” Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting. <https://azcir.org/news/2021/11/04/fragile-arizona-child-care-system-faces-decade-neglect/>

⁸Education Forward Arizona. (2021). “Disinvestments in Early Education Are Hurting Children and Families.” Author. <https://educationforwardarizona.org/disinvestments-in-early-education-are-hurting-children-and-families/>

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰National Institute for Early Education Research. (2020). The State of Preschool 2020 - State Preschool Yearbook.” Author.

In 2020, nearly 53 percent of Arizonans living in rural areas did not have access to broadband. This is more than double the national rate of disconnectedness (25%).¹² In many Arizona communities, the pandemic has accelerated efforts to expand broadband access but more current data on access/connectivity rates in 2021 or 2022 were not available at the time this publication was being developed.

Table 1: 2020 Percentage of Population Without Broadband Internet Access, by County

County	Percent Overall	Percent of Urban Areas	Percent of Rural Areas
Statewide	12	5	53
Apache	73	64	76
Cochise	25	5	59
Coconino	35	10	75
Gila	22	8	40
Graham	21	2	41
Greenlee	10	1	18
La Paz	29	13	41
Maricopa	7	5	46
Mohave	20	4	60
Navajo	40	13	61
Pima	8	5	40
Pinal	30	14	62
Santa Cruz	21	5	60
Yavapai	16	4	35
Yuma	11	2	65

Source: Center for the Future of Arizona¹³

¹²Center for the Future of Arizona. (2022). "Progress Meters: Infrastructure—Broadband." Author. <https://www.arizonafuture.org/arizona-progress-meters/infrastructure/broadband/>

¹³Ibid.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPOTLIGHT: **TUCSON/PIMA COUNTY**

Tucson's early childhood landscape is comprised of numerous partners and stakeholders, including school districts, state government agencies, Head Start, institutions of higher education, advocates, the business community, early care and education providers based in centers and homes, parents, local government, and community-based organizations.

Anchored at the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, The Cradle to Career (C2C) Partnership and the First Focus on Kids (FFK) Coalition are two community efforts that serve to connect partners in Tucson's early childhood systems. C2C brings together resources, leadership, and innovation from throughout the community to ensure that every student achieves key educational milestones along their pathway from birth to adulthood. The First Focus on Kids Coalition began in 1999 with a common vision: "all young children birth to age 8 in Tucson are in safe and supportive environments that promote their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being." Today, with nearly 100 partners, FFK continues to work toward that shared vision with the support and alignment of partners. The United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona convenes the C2C Partnership and the FFK Coalition using a collective impact model.

Tucson has a long history of coming together on behalf of its youngest residents, and the community's culture of collaboration set the foundation for the most recent "win" in early childhood: the Pima Early Education Program. In early 2021, the Pima County Board of Supervisors approved a motion directing staff to budget \$10 million to assist preschool age children from low-income families to attend high-quality early learning programs. Contributions from the City of Tucson, the towns of Oro Valley and Marana, school districts, the business community, non-profits, and individuals brought the total funding for the effort to about \$13 million for the first year. The result is a multi-sector effort to fund high-quality preschool and capacity building for high-quality providers. The Pima Early Education Program Scholarship program launched in July 2021 and expects to serve approximately 1,200 children (ages three to five) from low-income households per year, thereby increasing opportunities for families to access high-quality care throughout the city and county.

KEY INDICATORS:

Early Childhood Education and Care in Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable Municipalities

This section provides summary tables with data on select indicators of early childhood education and care need, access, economic impact, and workforce. For each table, there is a brief explanation of the included data as well as relevant methodological notes.

Early Childhood Population in Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable Municipalities

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Table 2. Arizona Children < 5 Living in Poverty

City/Town	Total Children Under the Age of 5	Children Under the Age of 5 Living in Poverty	Children in Poverty as a Percentage of Total Under the Age of 5
Statewide	433,968	88,674	20%
Phoenix	118,196	27,467	23%
Mesa	33,887	7,800	23%
Tucson	32,691	8,068	25%
Gilbert	18,213	1,172	6%
Tempe	8,474	1,786	21%
Yuma	7,108	2,323	33%
Goodyear	4,871	374	8%
Casa Grande	3,701	933	25%
Flagstaff	3,433	320	9%
Marana	2,978	300	10%
Sahuarita	2,484	163	7%
Prescott	1,228	72	6%
Nogales	1,128	488	43%
Tolleson	580	99	17%
Miami	170	79	46%

Source: American Community Survey, 2019 5-year estimates

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPOTLIGHT: **TEMPE**

The City of Tempe supports its youngest residents and their families with early literacy, preschool, and in-school tutoring and mentoring programs. These free and low-cost initiatives are designed to create equitable access to programs that help ensure school success for all.

Tempe is proud to be the first city in Arizona to provide city-funded, high-quality preschool with Tempe PRE. Implemented in partnership with the Tempe Elementary School District, Tempe PRE is a free and low-cost full-day program for three- and four-year-old children that offers a 1:9 staff to child ratio and High Scope Curriculum delivered by certified teachers.

In 2015, Tempe leaders became aware of the challenges families face in ensuring that their children start Kindergarten ready to succeed. They embarked on a feasibility study to identify how the city could best support families in accessing high-quality early learning. The feasibility study focused on expanding high-quality preschool through a partnership with the Tempe Elementary School District, the city's Kid Zone Preschool program, and Quality First, the statewide QRIS program.

Roughly 3,075 three- and four-year-olds live in Tempe. Two school districts serve elementary students: Tempe Elementary and Kyrene. There are high levels of poverty throughout Tempe, as demonstrated by the fact that 75 percent of children in the Tempe Elementary School district, and 41 percent of the children in the Kyrene school district, qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch. Currently, 64 percent of children are not reaching reading benchmarks upon entry to kindergarten on the DIBELS Next assessment tool, and 58 percent of children are not meeting the benchmark on the AzMERIT Reading/Language Arts Assessment in third grade.

It is also true that too few children in Tempe have access to high-quality preschool and that the areas of highest poverty within Tempe have the fewest high-quality preschools available to families. Quality First is making substantial gains in increasing the level of quality in enrolled centers; however, not all centers are enrolled in the program. Since it launched in 2017, Tempe PRE has served more than 1,500 children and their families with 11 classrooms located on seven Tempe Elementary School District campuses. Staff regularly engage with Tempe PRE families through check-in chats and seasonal celebrations to ensure that our program is meeting their needs.

Preschool students transitioning into the elementary grades are supported academically through an AARP Foundation Experience Corps literacy tutoring program, in which trained tutors ages 50+ are paired with struggling readers (in kindergarten through third grade) to provide one-on-one weekly mentoring for the entire school year.

On top of this, Read On Tempe helps families build their home libraries by providing books and activities through our Helping Us Grow (HUG) program. Supports for parents are available at no cost through the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, the most evidence-based parenting education program available anywhere.

More information is available at [Tempe Pre](#) and [Read On Tempe](#).

Child Care Providers in Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable Municipalities

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, Table 3 shows the total number of child care centers, the number of family child care providers, and the number of accredited providers in each municipality.

Table 3: Count of Child Care Providers, by City/Town

City/Town	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Providers	# of Accredited Providers
Statewide	2,069	477	205
Phoenix	425	62	25
Mesa	135	15	12
Tucson	287	181	69
Gilbert	98	5	7
Tempe	77	6	4
Yuma	60	29	15
Goodyear	31	2	2
Casa Grande	19	3	-
Flagstaff	44	-	2
Marana	8	3	1
Sahuarita	7	3	-
Prescott	14	-	2
Nogales	10	18	2
Tolleson	7	3	-
Miami	1	-	-

Source: *Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral*

Gap Between Early Childhood Care Need and Availability in Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable Municipalities

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers, the definition of which includes “child care centers, family child care homes, state Pre-K programs, preschools, Head Start, military-certified or registered programs, and license exempt care designated by state statutes.”

See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Table 4. Arizona Early Childhood Care Need and Availability

City/Town	Need (Children 5 & under with all parents in labor force)	Availability (Child care slots offered by state-recognized providers)	Gap (Children who may need care but don't have access to a nearby provider with available slots)	
			Total	Percentage
Statewide	304,180	234,280	76,740	25%
Phoenix	81,036	65,681	16,758	21%
Mesa	23,746	14,482	4,027	17%
Tucson	24,973	20,065	5,418	22%
Gilbert	12,205	13,375	1,824	15%
Tempe	6,241	7,426	746	12%
Yuma	4,595	3,727	1,454	32%
Goodyear	3,623	5,000	900	25%
Casa Grande	2,570	1,429	1,134	44%
Flagstaff	2,945	2,308	843	29%
Marana	1,909	1,119	194	10%
Sahuarita	1,362	346	725	53%
Prescott and Prescott Valley	2,410	2,157	526	22%
Nogales	813	565	485	60%
Tolleson	404	618	198	49%
Miami and Globe	488	190	330	68%

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPOTLIGHT: **PHOENIX**

The City of Phoenix is committed to increasing access to services for families with children under five in underinvested communities through educational and literacy partnerships. The City leads the Read On Phoenix (ROP) initiative, which is a partnership of community stakeholders dedicated to ensuring students have the skills necessary to read at grade level by the end of third grade. The City has supercharged efforts to increase school readiness and early childhood activities in targeted communities.

Approximately 13,000 Phoenix third graders are not reading at grade level. The pandemic has led to a “COVID-19 slide,” interrupted learning that is further widening the gap between student achievement in literacy and math, particularly in low-income communities.

In addition to the ROP initiative, Phoenix offers an array of literacy-enriched activities to support children and families that increase educational attainment, foster self-sufficiency and enhanced quality of life. For example, Family Resource Centers are co-located in parks, housing facilities, and libraries to increase access to supportive services for families with children under five. The program provides information on child development, literacy skills, health and safety, and trainings on how to engage with their children. Phoenix also offers Head Start Birth-to-Five programs that serve more than 3,400 children and families a year.

Phoenix also supports several early childhood education programs that build the foundation for academic, behavioral and social-emotional skills, such as Kindergarten Bootcamp. The program provides parents tools, information, and activities to help prepare their children for school success in a fun, educational, and interactive setting. Parents and caregivers work with their children on foundational skills that have been demonstrated to be the most important for both a successful kindergarten and school experience.

The Phoenix Great Start program provides children and families in low-income communities with free admission to educational and cultural centers before entering kindergarten. The City targets families from low-income communities to provide strong family engagement and kindergarten-readiness workshops and activities to begin supporting early literacy development with their children.

Phoenix is dedicated to bridging the gap and addressing challenges that impact early childhood and student achievement. The City is committed to increasing access to early childhood programs and encouraging families to reinforce learning beyond the school day.

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap in Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable Municipalities

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses, and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts are the amount that the combined family/household and business losses would have contributed in taxes, now and in the future.

See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Table 5. Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gaps

City/Town	Economic Impact (future value in \$)	
	Low	High
Statewide*	3,000,000,000	4,600,000,000
Phoenix	684,194,000	1,045,179,000
Mesa	164,414,000	251,160,000
Tucson	207,578,000	317,097,000
Gilbert	74,470,000	113,761,000
Tempe	30,458,000	46,527,000
Yuma	46,104,000	70,428,000
Goodyear	36,745,000	56,132,000
Casa Grande	46,299,000	70,726,000
Flagstaff	29,767,000	45,472,000
Marana	7,433,000	11,354,000
Sahuarita	27,777,000	42,432,000
Prescott and Prescott Valley	17,908,000	27,356,000
Nogales	17,740,000	27,099,000
Tolleson	8,084,000	12,349,000
Miami and Globe	12,070,000	18,438,000

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

*Impact estimates from the Bipartisan Policy Center

Early Child Care Prices and Workforce Wages

The affordability of early child care options within reasonable distance of home is one of the most significant obstacles that families face in accessing the care they need. For each municipality, Table 6 presents *county-level* data (the smallest jurisdiction for which data is available) median market rate prices for early child care.

Considering the early childhood workforce challenges, and the compensation inequities facing early childhood professionals nationally and in Arizona, Table 6 also includes available median hourly wage data, again at the county level, for early childhood education and care professionals. Broadly, a lack of specific hourly wage data for all levels of experience and professional level in early childhood provides a challenge for professionalizing and supporting the workforce.

Table 6: Hourly Prices and Wages for Child Care, by County

City/Town	Median Weekly Market Rate Child Care Prices for 3–5-Year-Olds	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education, Median Hourly Wage	Education Administrators Preschool and Child Care Center Program, Median Hourly Wage
Phoenix	\$170.00	\$14.30	\$19.07
Mesa	\$170.00	\$14.30	\$19.07
Tucson	\$167.35	\$13.83	\$21.41
Gilbert	\$170.00	\$14.30	\$19.07
Tempe	\$170.00	\$14.30	\$19.07
Yuma	\$125.00	\$15.75	\$21.62
Goodyear	\$170.00	\$14.30	\$19.07
Casa Grande	\$142.50	N/A	N/A
Flagstaff	\$151.80	\$16.76	N/A
Marana	\$167.35	\$13.83	\$21.41
Sahuarita	\$167.35	\$13.83	\$21.41
Prescott	\$151.80	\$15.44	N/A
Nogales	\$125.00	N/A	N/A
Tolleson	\$170.00	\$14.30	\$19.07
Miami	\$142.50	N/A	N/A

Source: *Arizona at Work*

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPOTLIGHT: **MESA**

The City of Mesa supports early childhood education through a variety of programs and initiatives to increase equitable access to quality early learning for Mesa families.

Mesa is a member of the National League of Cities Arizona PreK Alignment for Early Childhood Success Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to align regional efforts, raise awareness, support universal PreK, and develop a sustainable financing and resourcing plan for universal PreK in Arizona.

Four K-12 districts serve City of Mesa elementary students: Mesa Public Schools, Gilbert Public Schools, Queen Creek Unified School District, and Higley Unified School District. In 2018, the City of Mesa partnered with Mesa Public Schools and Mesa United Way to launch the Mesa K-Ready program, which focuses on kindergarten readiness and promoting the importance of early childhood learning. Mesa K-Ready offers a free program, targeted to low-income families, and uses a combination of academic lessons, fun learning activities, and family support to help Mesa parents and their three and four-year-olds prepare for kindergarten.

The City of Mesa Libraries work in partnership with the school districts to promote early literacy through family access, weekly targeted age group story times, and summer reading programs.

In Fall 2021, Mesa formed the Education and Workforce Roundtable with four strategic focus groups, one of which centers on early childhood through high school. This focus group is made up of industry leaders and meets monthly to collaborate, share expertise and resources, and advise the City Council on the highest priorities to strengthen, streamline, and align early learning needs.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA SNAPSHOT:

Arizona Mayors Education Roundtable Municipalities

This section provides consolidated snapshots of the data for each municipality featured in the tables in the previous section. For each set of indicators, the relevant explanations and methodological notes are repeated, so that these snapshots can be extracted for use as stand-alone fact sheets for each municipality.

Casa Grande

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

3,701

of children under the age of five

933 (25%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

19

of child care centers

3

of family child care providers

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of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

2,570

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

1,429

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

1,134 (44%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$70,726,000 (high)

\$46,299,000 (low)

Flagstaff

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

3,433

of children under the age of five

320 (9%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

44

of child care centers

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of family child care providers

2

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

2,945

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

2,308

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

843 (29%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$45,472,000 (high)

\$29,767,000 (low)

Gilbert

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

18,213

of children under the age of five

1,172 (6%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

98

of child care centers

5

of family child care providers

7

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

12,205

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

13,375

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

1,824 (15%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$113,761,000 (high)

\$74,470,000 (low)

Goodyear

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

4,871

of children under the age of five

374 (8%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

31

of child care centers

2

of family child care providers

2

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

3,623

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

5,000

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

900 (25%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$56,132,000 (high)

\$36,745,000 (low)

Marana

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

2,978

of children under the age of five

300 (10%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

8

of child care centers

3

of family child care providers

1

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

1,909

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

1,119

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

194 (10%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$11,354,000 (high)

\$7,433,000 (low)

Mesa

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

33,887

of children under the age of five

7,800 (23%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

135

of child care centers

15

of family child care providers

12

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

23,746

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

14,482

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

4,027 (17%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$251,160,000 (high)

\$164,414,000 (low)

Miami and Globe

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

170

of children under the age of five

79 (46%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

1

of child care centers

—

of family child care providers

—

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center); due to area size, data reflect Miami + Globe

Need

488

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

190

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

330 (68%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center); due to area size, data reflect Miami + Globe

\$18,438,000 (high)

\$12,070,000 (low)

Nogales

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

1,128

of children under the age of five

488 (43%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

10

of child care centers

18

of family child care providers

2

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

813

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

565

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

485 (60%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$27,099,000 (high)

\$17,740,000 (low)

Phoenix

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

118,196

of children under the age of five

27,467 (23%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

425

of child care centers

62

of family child care providers

25

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

81,036

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

65,681

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

16,758 (21%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$1,045,179,000 (high)

\$684,194,000 (low)

Prescott

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

1,228

of children under the age of five

72 (6%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

14

of child care centers

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of family child care providers

2

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center); due to area size, data reflect Prescott + Prescott Valley

Need

2,410

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

2,157

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

526 (22%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center); due to area size, data reflect Prescott + Prescott Valley

\$27,356,000 (high)

\$17,908,000 (low)

Sahuarita

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

2,484

of children under the age of five

163 (7%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

7

of child care centers

3

of family child care providers

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of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

1,362

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

346

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

725 (53%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$42,432,000 (high)

\$27,777,000 (low)

Tempe

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

8,474

of children under the age of five

1,786 (21%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

77

of child care centers

6

of family child care providers

4

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

6,241

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

7,426

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

746 (12%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$46,527,000 (high)

\$30,458,000 (low)

Tolleson

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

580

of children under the age of five

99 (17%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

7

of child care centers

3

of family child care providers

--

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

404

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

618

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

198 (49%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$12,349,000 (high)

\$8,084,000 (low)

Tucson

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

32,691

of children under the age of five

8,068 (25%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

287

of child care centers

181

of family child care providers

69

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

24,973

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

20,065

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

5,418 (22%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$317,097,000 (high)

\$207,578,000 (low)

Yuma

Early Childhood Population

The early childhood population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) represents the number of children in each municipality who are younger than the age at which children typically enter kindergarten in Arizona (age five), as well as the proportion of that population that is living in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey

7,108

of children under the age of five

2,323 (33%)

of children under the age of five living in poverty

Child Care Providers

Derived from the Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral database of childcare options in Arizona municipalities, provider counts are disaggregated by type and accreditation.

Source: Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral

60

of child care centers

29

of family child care providers

15

of accredited providers

Gap Between Child Care Need and Availability

The gap between child care need and availability represents the number of children age five and under (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates) who have all parents in the workforce and who cannot access child care within driving distance. Driving distance is defined as 3.5 miles for urban areas and 10 miles for rural areas. The care gap percentage reflects the total gap divided by the total need. The care gap does not take into account the demand for child care—the actual number of families that use or seek child care from state-recognized providers—and which can be locally heightened by lack of access. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

Need

4,595

of children age five and under with all available parents in the labor force

Availability

3,727

of child care slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers

Care Gap

1,454 (32%)

of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access care

Future Economic Impact of Child Care Gap

The future economic impact of the child care gap in each municipality is the negative effect of that gap on families/households, businesses and tax revenues. Presented as a range, with low and high estimates modeled, it is a composite of the annual impact (the one-year burden on the economy) and the compounding losses that accumulate over the subsequent 10 years. Family/household impacts include losses incurred through reduced work hours and exit from the workforce, as well as future earnings losses. Businesses impacts reflect losses such as reduced productivity, pay, and benefits to employees. Tax revenue impacts represent the combined amount that family/household and business losses would have contributed to government revenues. See <https://childcaregap.org/> for additional methodological information.

Source: Read On Arizona (data from Bipartisan Policy Center)

\$70,428,000 (high)

\$46,104,000 (low)

APPENDICES

The appendices provide supplementary resources related to early childhood education and care. These resources are produced and maintained by organizations with a broad, national focus, as well as by Arizona-based and Arizona-focused entities.

Early Childhood Education and Care Data Sources

Metric	Source	Level	Available Disaggregation
Number of children under the age of 5	United States Census Data	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregated by under 5 to 85 and over Total population Sex Sex ratio Median age years Age dependency ratio Old age dependency ratio Child dependency ratio Margin of error for each number and percent estimate
Number of children under the age of 5 living in poverty?	United States Census Data	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregated by under 18 to 65 and over Sex Race Educational attainment Employment status Work experience All individuals at 50% to 500% below poverty level Unrelated individuals for whom poverty status is determined Margin of error for each number and percent estimate
Number of children under the age of 5 not in poverty?	United States Census Data	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregated by under 18 to 65 and over Sex Race Educational attainment Employment status Work experience All individuals at 50% to 500% below poverty level Unrelated individuals for whom poverty status is determined Margin of error for each number and percent estimate
Children in poverty as a % of total?	United States Census Data	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sex Race Educational attainment Employment status Work experience All individuals at 50% to 500% below poverty level Unrelated individuals for whom poverty status is determined Margin of error for each number and percent estimate
Number of children under the age of 6 only living in male only household (no spouse present)?	United States Census Data	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With own children of the household under 18 years Under 6 years only Under 6 and 6 to 17 years 6 to 17 years only No own children of the household under 18 years
Number of children under the age of 6 only living in female only household (no spouse present)?	United States Census Data	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With own children of the household under 18 years Under 6 years only Under 6 and 6 to 17 years 6 to 17 years only No own children of the household under 18 years

Metric	Source	Level	Available Disaggregation
Number of Child Care Centers	Arizona Child Care Provider - Child Care Resource and Referral	State	Not Disaggregated Further
Number of Family Child Care providers	Arizona Child Care Provider - Child Care Resource and Referral	State	Not Disaggregated Further
# of Accredited Providers Available Per City	Arizona Child Care Provider - Child Care Resource and Referral	State	Not Disaggregated Further
2018 DES Child Care median weekly Market Rate Child Care Prices for 3,4, and 5-year-olds (by county)	Arizona Child Care Provider - Child Care Resource and Referral	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated by county • Age: Under 1 year; 1 & 2 years; 3,4,5 years; school age • Child care centers • Approved homes • Certified group homes • Unregulated homes
Preschool teachers, except special education, median hourly wage (by county)	Arizona at Work - Innovative Workforce Solutions	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated by county, not disaggregated further
Education administrators preschool and childcare center program, median hourly wage (by county)	Arizona at Work - Innovative Workforce Solutions	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated by county, not disaggregated further

Profiles and Rankings of Early Childhood Education and Care in Arizona

[The State of Preschool 2020](#)

National Institute for Early Education Research

[2021 Kids Count Profile](#)

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

[2020 Early Childhood Workforce Index](#)

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment,
University of California, Berkeley

[Childcare Gaps in 2019](#)

The Bipartisan Policy Institute

[Early Learning Factsheet 2019: Arizona](#)

Center for American Progress

Arizona-Specific Early Childhood Informational Resources

[Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral](#)

Arizona Department of Economic Security

Arizona Child Care Resource & Referral enables users to search for, and filter according to specified criteria, early childhood providers in their city or town.

[First Things First Data Center](#)

First Things First

The First Things First Data Center enables users to access aggregate data related to the agency's investments in early childhood education and care.

[MapLit](#)

Read On Arizona

MapLIT is an interactive mapping tool the functions as a single, central resource to access key data—from census, school, health, family engagement—related to early literacy outcomes in Arizona communities.

Additional Resources for Municipal Leaders

[Digital Equity in Arizona County Profiles](#)

Connect Arizona

[Supporting Early Childhood Success: Action Kit for Municipal Leaders](#)

Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities

[A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy](#)

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

[Strengthening the Early Childhood Education Continuum](#)

Education Commission of the States

[Early Childhood Municipal Policy 101: Financing and Resourcing for Early Childhood Success](#)

Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities

[Messaging Briefs: High Quality, Affordable Child Care](#)

Zero to Three; National Collaborative for Infants & Toddlers

[The Economics of Early Childhood Policy](#)

RAND Corporation

[No Home Left Offline: Bridging the Broadband Affordability Gap](#)

Education Superhighway

About WestEd

WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research, development, and service agency that works with education and other communities throughout the United States and abroad to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd has more than a dozen offices nationwide, from Massachusetts, Vermont, Georgia, and Washington, DC, to Arizona and California, with headquarters in San Francisco.



About Collaborative Communications

Collaborative is an education-focused communications and consulting firm. For over two decades, Collaborative has supported the efforts of regional and national organizations to improve education and learning, close opportunity gaps, and strengthen environments that enable students and families to thrive.

